

Claim 100 (new) The composition of Claim 16, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

Claim 101 (new) The wet ribbon of Claim 17, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

Claim 102 (new) The dry ribbon of Claim 18, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

Claim 103 (new) The composition of Claim 38, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

Claim 104 (new) The wet ribbon of Claim 39, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

Claim 105 (new) The dry ribbon of Claim 40, wherein the composition is substantially free of buffers.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-12, 14-24; 26-32, 35-45 and 62-99 are pending and were examined. Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10-15, 17, 18, 26-32, 35-40, 94-99 are currently amended. By this amendment, Claims 100-105 are added and Claims 1 and 24 have been cancelled without prejudice, leaving Claims 2-3, 5-12, 14-23, 26-32, 35-45 and 62-105 remaining in this application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of Claims 1 and 24, which applicants continue to believe is patentable, in a future related application.

Claims 62-93 remain allowed and Claims 16-23 and 38-43 are said to be objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-12, 14, 15, 24-32, 35-37 and 94-99 stand rejected.

Applicants respectfully note that the present Office action does not state any disposition for pending Claims 44 and 45, which depend from Claims 39 and 40, respectively. Because Claims 44 and 45 were said to be directed to allowable subject matter in the previous Office action, and because they depend from claims said to be allowable over the cited art in the present action, applicants presume that Claims 44 and 45 are allowable. However, clarification is respectfully requested.

Amendments

Applicants appreciate the indication that Claims 16-23 and 38-43, drawn to compositions with a specified viscosity range, moisture content and tensile strength, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. See present Office action, p. 5. Applicants first respectfully note, however, that Claim 16 was already so amended in the previous response, to include all limitations of Claim 1 from which Claim 16 directly depended. Further, dependent Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10-12, 14, 15 and 94 have presently been amended to depend from independent Claim 16, instead of now cancelled Claim 1.

In further response to the indication that Claims 16-23 and 38-43 would be allowable if rewritten as suggested, each of Claims 17 and 18, drawn to compositions of different moisture contents, has been rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of Claim 1 from which originally each of these claims directly depended. Claim 12 also has been amended to correct a readily apparent typographical error, whereby the phrase "present in" was inadvertently written as "presenting".

Further still, each of Claims 38-40 has been amended to include all features of Claim 24 upon which each of these claims formerly was directly dependent. Dependent Claims 26-32, 35-37 and 97 have also been amended, to depend from Claim 38 instead of now cancelled Claim 24. Claims 94-99 have been further amended by reorganizing the language to emphasize that the claimed subject matter is “a film, ribbon sheet or tube” comprising the recited composition.

Newly added dependent Claims 100-105 are drawn to preferred embodiments of the invention in which the claimed compositions are substantially free of buffers. Support for these claims may be found, for instance, at page 8, lines 3-7, and in the Examples (Examples 1-12, p. 17-p. 20).

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-12, 14, 15, 24-32, 35-37 and 94-99 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(b), as allegedly unpatentable over Tanner (WO 01/03677) in combination with Gilleland (WO 01/91721), Michaud et al. (US 6143324) and Gilleland et al. [*sic*, Leanaerts et al.] (US 6607748).

Applicants have cancelled independent Claims 1 and 24, without prejudice, thereby mooting the rejections of these claims.

Further, in accordance with the indication that Claims 16-23 and 38-43 would be allowable if rewritten to include all limitations of the base and intervening claims, claim 16 was previously so rewritten. Claim 16 is therefore believed to be allowable over the cited art without further amendment. Further still, applicants have similarly amended Claims 17, 18 and 38-40, as set forth above, by rewriting them in independent form as

suggested by the Examiner. Applicants therefore believe that each of independent Claims 16-18 and 38-40 is allowable over the cited art.

Applicants also have further amended the claims such that all other rejected claims now depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the above independent claims believed to be allowable over the cited art, instead of from cancelled Claims 1 and 24. Applicants therefore also believe that other rejected claims as presently amended, that is, each of Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10-12, 14, 15, 25-32, 35-37 and 94-99, is also allowable over the cited art.

In view of the above, and the fact that rejected Claims 46-61 have been cancelled, applicants believe the present amendments fully address all rejections as well as all objections to claims as depending upon rejected base claims. All pending claims as currently amended are therefore believed to be patentable over the cited disclosures and otherwise allowable.

All outstanding objections and rejections having been overcome by the present amendment and response, applicants therefore believe that the present case is in condition for allowance and respectfully request early notice to that effect.

If any issues remain to be addressed in this matter, which might be resolved by discussion, the examiner is respectfully requested to call applicants' undersigned counsel at the number indicated below.

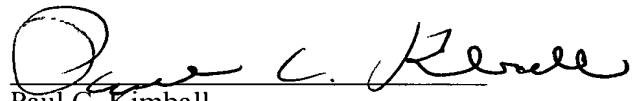
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AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required for the timely consideration of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 09-0528.

Respectfully submitted,

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